NUMB. LIX.

The SPECTATOR.

Operoſe Nihil agunt. Sen.

Tueſday, May 8. 1711.

THERE is nothing more certain than that every Man would be a Wit if he could, and notwithſtanding Pedants of pretended Depth and Solidity are apt to decry the Writings of a polite Author, as *Flaſh* and *Froth*, they all of them ſhow upon Occaſion that they would ſpare no Pains to arrive at the Character of thoſe whom they ſeem to deſpiſe. For this Reaſon we often find them endeavouring at Works of Fancy, which coſt them infinite Pangs in the Production. The Truth of it is, a Man had better be a Gally-Slave than a Wit, were one to gain that Title by thoſe Elaborate Trifles which have been the Compoſitions of ſuch Authors as were often Maſters of great Learning but no Genius.

In my laſt Paper I mentioned ſome of theſe falſe Kinds of Wit among the Ancients, and in this ſhall give the Reader two or three other Species of 'em, that flouriſhed in the ſame early Ages of the World. The firſt I ſhall produce are the *Lipogrammatiſts* or *Letter-droppers* of Antiquity, that would take an Exception, without any Reaſon, againſt ſome particular Letter in the Alphabet, ſo as not to admit it once into a whole Poem. One *Tryphiodorus* was a great Maſter in this kind of Writing. He compoſed an *Odiſſey* or Epic Poem on the Adventures of *Ulyſſes*, conſiſting of four and twenty Books, having entirely baniſhed the Letter *A* from his firſt Book, which was called *Alpha* (as *Lucus a non lucendo*) becauſe there was not an *Alpha* in it. His ſecond Book was inſcribed *Beta*, for the ſame Reaſon. In ſhort, the Poet excluded the whole four and twenty Letters in their turns, and ſhowed them, one after another, that he could do his Buſineſs without them.

It muſt have been very pleaſant to have ſeen this Poet avoiding the reprobate Letter, as much as another would a falſe Quantity, and making his Eſcape from it through the Several *Greek* Dialects, when he was preſſed with it in any particular Syllable. For the moſt apt and elegant Word in the whole Language was rejected, like a Diamond with a Flaw in it, if it appeared blemiſh'd with a wrong Letter. I ſhall only obſerve upon this Head, that if the Work I have here mentioned had been now extant, the *Odiſſey* of *Tryphiodorus*, in all probability, would have been oftner quoted by our learned Pedants, than the *Odiſſey* of *Homer*. What a perpetual Fund would it have been of obſolete Words and Phraſes, unuſual Barbariſms and Ruſticities, abſurd Spellings and complicated Dialects? I make no Queſtion but it would have been looked upon as one of the moſt valuable Treaſuries of the *Greek* Tongue.

I find likewiſe among the Ancients that ingenious kind of Conceit, which the Moderns diſtinguiſh by the Name of a *Rebus*, that does not ſink a Letter but a whole Word, by ſubſtituting a Picture in its place. When *Cæſar* was one of the Maſters of the *Roman* Mint, he placed the Figure of an Elephant upon the Reverſe of the publick Mony; the Word *Cæſar* ſignifying an Elephant in the *Punick* Language. This was artificially contrived by *Cæſar*, becauſe it was not lawful for a private Man to ſtamp his own Figure upon the Coin of the Commonwealth. *Cicero*, who was ſo call'd from the Founder of his Family, that was marked on the Noſe with a little Wenn like a Vetch (which is *Cicer* in *Latin*) inſtead of *Marcus Tullius Cicero*, ordered the Words *Marcus Tullius* with the Figure of a Vetch at the end of 'em to be inſcribed on a publick Monument. This was done probably to ſhew that he was neither aſhamed of his Name or Family, notwithſtanding the Envy of his Competitors had often reproach'd him with both. In the ſame manner we read of a famous Building that was marked in ſeveral Parts of it with the Figures of a Frog and a Lizard: Thoſe Words in *Greek* having been the Names of the Architects, who by the Laws of their Country were never permitted to inſcribe their own Names upon their Works. For the ſame Reaſon it is thought, that the Forelock of the Horſe in the Antique Equeſtrian Statue of *Marcus Aurelius*, repreſents at a diſtance the ſhape of an Owl, to intimate the Country of the Statuary, who, in all probability, was an *Athenian*. This kind of Wit was very much in Vogue among our own Country-men about an Age or two ago, who did not practiſe it for any oblique Reaſon, as the Ancients above-mentioned, but purely for the ſake of being Witty. Among innumerable Inſtances that may be given of this Nature, I ſhall produce the Device of one Mr. *Newberry*, as I find it mention'd by our learned *Cambden* in his Remains. Mr. *Newberry*, to repreſent his Name by a Picture, hung up at his Door the Sign of a Yew-tree, that had ſeveral Berries upon it, and in the midſt of them a great golden *N* hung upon a Bough of the Tree, which

which by the help of a little falſe Spelling made up the Word *N-ew-berry*.

I ſhall conclude this Topick with a *Rebus*, which has been lately hewn out in Free ſtone, and erected over two of the Portals of *Blenheim*-Houſe, being the Figure of a monſtrous Lion tearing to pieces a little Cock. For the better underſtanding of which Device, I muſt acquaint my *Engliſh* Reader that a Cock has the Misfortune to be called in *Latin* by the ſame Word that ſignifies a *French*-Man, as a Lion is the Emblem of the *Engliſh* Nation. Such a Device in ſo noble a Pile of Building looks like a Pun in an Heroic Poem; and I am very ſorry the truly ingenious Architect would ſuffer the Statuary to blemiſh his excellent Plan with ſo poor a Conceit: But I hope what I have ſaid will gain Quarter for the Cock, and deliver him out of the Lion's Paw.

I find likewiſe in ancient Times the Conceit of making an Eccho talk ſenſibly, and give rational Anſwers. If this could be excuſable in any Writer it would be in *Ovid*, where he introduces the Eccho as a Nymph, before ſhe was worn away into nothing but a Voice. The learned *Eraſmus*, tho' a Man of Wit and Genius, has compoſed a Dialogue upon this ſilly kind of Device, and made uſe of an Eccho who ſeems to have been a very extraordinary Linguiſt, for ſhe anſwers the Perſon ſhe talks with in *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, according as ſhe found the Syllables which ſhe was to repeat in any of thoſe learned Languages. *Hudibras*, in Ridicule of this falſe kind of Wit, has deſcribed *Bruin* bewailing the Loſs of his Bear to a ſolitary Eccho, who is of great uſe to the Poet in ſeveral Diſticks, as ſhe does not only repeat after him, but helps out his Verſe, and furniſhes him with *Rhymes*.

He rag'd, and kept as heavy a Coil as
Stout Hercules *for loſs of* Hylas;
Forcing the Vallies to repeat
The Accents of his ſad Regret:
He beat his Breaſt, and tore his Hair,
For Loſs of his dear Crony Bear,
That Eccho from the hollow Ground
His doleful Wailings did reſound
More wiſtfully, by many times,
Than in ſmall Poets Splay-foot Rhymes,
That make her, in their rueful Stories,
To anſwer to Int'rogatories,
And moſt unconſcionably depoſe
Things of which She nothing knows:
And when ſhe has ſaid all ſhe can ſay,
'Tis wreſted to the Lover's Fancy.
Quoth he, O whither, wicked Bruin,
Art thou fled to my — Eccho, Ruin?
I thought th' hadſt ſcorn'd to budge a Step
For Fear. (*Quoth Eccho*) Marry guep.
Am not I here to take thy Part!
Then what has quell'd thy ſtubborn Heart?
Have theſe Bones rattled, and this Head
So often in thy Quarrel bled?
Nor did I ever winch or grudge it,
For thy dear Sake. (*Quoth ſhe*) Mum budget.
Think'ſt thou 'twill not be laid i'th' Diſh
Thou turn'dſt thy Back? Quoth Eccho, Piſh.
To run from thoſe th' hadſt overcome
Thus cowardly? Quoth Eccho, Mum.
But what a-vengeance makes thee fly
From me too, as thine Enemy?
Or if thou hadſt no Thought of me,
Nor what I have endur'd for Thee,
Yet Shame and Honour might prevail
To keep thee thus from turning Tail:
For who wou'd grudge to ſpend his Blood in
His Honour's Cauſe? Quoth ſhe, a Pudding.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Perſons of Quality,
For the Benefit of Mr. Bullock.
By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane, this preſent Tueſday, the 8th of May, will be preſented a Play, called, King Henry the Fourth, with the Humours of Sir John Falſtaff. The part of Falſtaff to be perform'd by Mr. Eſtcourt, Hotſpur by Mr. Booth, the King by Mr. Keene, Prince of Wales by Mr. Wilks, Douglas by Mr. Mills, Sir Richard Vernon Mr. Bullock Jun. 1 Carrier by Mr. Johnſon, 1 Carrier by Mr. Bullock, Francis by Mr. Norris, and the part of Kate, Hotſpur's Wife, by Mrs. Bradſhaw. To which will be added, a Farce, call'd, The Walking Statue; or, the Devil in the Wine Cellar.

This Play is ſold by Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Perſons of Quality.
For the Benefit of Meſ. Cuthbert, Lovelace and White.

AT Stationers-Hall near Ludgate, to Morrow being the 9th of May, will be a Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick by the beſt Performers: Particularly ſeveral ſelect Entertainments of the following (Engliſh) Opera's; viz. The Indian Queen, King Arthur, the Fairy Queen, and Dioclefian; the Maſque in Timon of Athens, the Paſtoral in the Libertine, with ſeveral Songs out of the St. Cæcelia's Muſick. All Compoſed by that great Maſter the late Mr. Henry Purcell. Tickets are delivered at Garraway's and Robin's Coffee-houſes in Exchange Alley, Will's and Batſon's in Cornhill, Sam's in Ludgate ſtreet, St. James's and Smyrna's at St. James's, and at the Hall at 5 s. per Ticket. Beginning at 6 a-Clock.

The Famous Water-Theatre of the late Ingenious Mr. Winſtanly is Opened, and will continue to be ſhewn for ſome time this Summer. There is the greateſt Curioſities in Water-Works the like was never performed before by any. It is ſhown for the Benefit of his Widow every Evening, at 5 of the Clock; with ſeveral new Additions made this Spring. Boxes 2 s. 6 d. Pit 1 s. 6 d. firſt Gallery 1 s. upper Gallery 6 d. It is at the lower End of Piccadilly, and is known by the Windmill on the top of it.

For Sale by the Candle.

On Wedneſday the 9th Inſtant at Lloyd's Coffee-Houſe in Lombard-ſtreet, at 6 in the Afternoon, (only one Cask a Lott) viz Fifty Two Pipes of excellent new Red Canry Florida Wine, deep, bright, freſh and of the right flavour, near, an entire Parcel juſt landed; now in a Cellar in the Gateway of Cuſtom-Houſe Key, between Billingſgate and Tower-Dock. Alſo 16 Pipes of excellent new Canary Wines, near, an entire Parcel lately landed; now in a Cellar under the Houſe of Mr. Samuel Royſton in Savage Garden, betwen the Arch in Grouched Friars and Tower Hill. All to be taſted this Day, from 7 to 1, and from 2 to 7, and all Wedneſday the 9th till the time of Sale. Catalogues ſhall be timely diſpers'd by Thomas Tomkins, Broker, in Seething-lane in Tower-ſtreet.

For Sale by the Candle.

On Friday the 11th Inſtant, at Loyd's Coffee-Houſe in Lombard ſtreet, at 9 in the Forenoon, and to continue till 1, then ſhall adjourn the Sale to 3 in the Afternoon and continue the ſame till all the Wines ſhall be ſold, (only 1 Cask in a Lot) viz. The entire Cargoe of the Ship Prince George, Capt. Tho. Stedman from Barcelona, conſiſting of 2 Butts of new Red Alicant, 156 Butts and 1 Hhds of new Red Barcelona Wine, very deep, bright and ſtrong extraordinary good, and ordinary. Note, The ſaid Wines are new, lately landed, and juſt put into a Cellar No. 12, and Warehouſe No. 11, in the Gateway of Freſh-Warf between London-Bridge and Billingſgate; and in a Warehouſe No. 102 up Stairs in the middle of the ſaid Gateway near the Thames, alſo in a Ground Warehouſe No. 41 on the ſaid Freſh Warf, fronting the Thames. All to be ſeen and taſted from 7 of the Clock this Morning to 7 in the Evening, and on Wedneſday and Thurſday. (The Buyers are invited and deſired to appear punctually at the Place of Sale at the Hour appointed, viz. 9 a Clock, becauſe the Lotts are many, and all determin'd to be ſold the aboveſaid Friday.) Catalogues to be had where the Wines are to be ſold, at the Cellar and Warehouſes where they lye, and at Tho. Tomkin's, Broker, in Seething-lane in Tower-Street.

The late Mr. Thoms Brown's Pictures (being a curious but ſmall Collection of the moſt eminent Maſters) will be ſold by Auction on Thurſday the 10th Inſtant. The Sale will begin at 11 a Clock in the Forenoon, at the late Monſieur Lyoncrown's Houſe in Leiceſter-Fields, the white Poſts on Weſt Side of the Square. The Pictures are to be ſeen this Day, To-morrow, and Thurſday before the Sale, and Catalogues had Gratis. There is likewiſe a Parcel of excellent Prints and Drawings of the moſt eminent Maſters, and 6 large Pieces of Tapeſtry Hangings belonging to the ſame place. The Houſe is to be Lett, with a Stable for 7 Horſes, and 2 Coach-houſes.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner, of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.